



The Silvers' Workshop

Charity Registration No. 1159283

Annual Report to the Charities Commission

2023

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General Statement.

This is our ninth annual report and in general things are starting to steadily improve since the heady days of the Covid Pandemic.

The start of the year brought us concerns about our duration within our present workshop, as we had been notified that our landlords had applied for Planning Consent to redevelop the plot, which months later saw the Local Authority reject the application. However, this last November, further notification was received that our landlord has appealed this decision to The Secretary of State and an outcome is due in the New Year.

Membership has risen strongly in the latter part of the year, and we are now back to pre-pandemic numbers with the possibility of opening five days a week in the New Year, rather than the four days we currently do.

The Silvers' Workshop draws members from the wider Reading Area and is a member of the UK Men's Shed Association, with over nine hundred member sheds throughout the British Isles.

Our aim is to provide a safe space for men to socialise, connect, converse and create, and by doing so help reduce loneliness and isolation which affects many older men.

Governance and Management.

We currently have ten Trustees who sit at least four times a year to review policy, finance and governance.

All meetings are fully recorded and the Minutes, once approved, are posted on the Members Noticeboard for all to scrutinise and comment upon accordingly. This allows for openness and full transparency.

Our Management Team consists of thirteen members, which includes eight Trustees. This team manages the workshop on a day-to-day basis, implementing the policies and budgets set out and approved by the Trustees. Prior to Covid we had four sub teams which had responsibility for Health & Safety, Finance, Property and Social and would report into the Management Team each month with their specific recommendations.

These teams have yet to be fully reformed since the pandemic and the overall responsibility for their various rolls has currently been undertaken by the main Management Team under the control of the Chair.

The Management Team meet monthly, except for August and work to an agreed agenda. All meetings are fully recorded and copies of the minutes, once approved are posted on the members noticeboard for all to read and comment upon, again, promoting openness and transparency.

All Trustees and Team Members give their time freely and no remuneration or expenses have been paid during this last year, other than expenses duly incurred whilst undertaking official workshop business.

No Trustee receives any benefit which is not available to the wider membership.

Membership.

Membership remains open to men who meet our objectives and can demonstrate their general mobility.

Our membership is currently 70 with more expected to join in the New Year.

External Links.

We continue to work closely with both Reading Voluntary Action who offer us free advice and training and U.K. Men's Shed Association which gives us access to all Men's Sheds in the UK.

Both the local community and local businesses are also very willing to help us to promote the Workshop and have assisted us greatly in the last 12 months. Our thanks to, in particular, to Laithwaite Wines and ASDA Tilehurst for their continued support.

About this last year.

This year has been about consolidation and rebuilding members confidence to return to the Workshop. We held a family picnic at the local National Trust property, Basildon House, in July, which was very well attended and enjoyed by all.

However, a lot of time has been spent looking for a new home, producing reports and raising funds through attending car boot sales and holding open days, such as the recent "Silver Sunday", held Nationally on 1st October, to fund such a move.

As well as allowing us to sell some of our member merchandise to raise funds, opening the Workshop allowed members of the local community to come in and meet with members and to hear about the benefits that they have gained from attending the Workshop. Not surprisingly, we also attracted a number of new members from the event.

Every Thursday the past Chair holds a Zoom chat for members unable to attend the workshop and who wish to catch up on what's happening.

For the fifth time in six years, we had a Christmas Stall in Reading town centre and sold a lot of craft merchandise made by the members. Money raised through this endeavour helps off-set the running costs of the workshop. We also opened the Workshop on "Silver Sunday", which allowed members of the local community to come in and meet with members, and for the members to sell some of our Christmas and other merchandise, and to raise funds for the Workshop. Not surprisingly, we attracted a number of new members from the event.

Projects.

Any tangible projects have been placed on hold this past year whilst we continue to search for a new home for our workshop. As previously stated, this is our first priority and arguably the most challenging project we have yet undertaken.

Property in Reading is unaffordable to a charity of our size, and due to the general economic challenges facing us all, money along with goodwill is in short supply.

Men's Health & Well-Being.

In recent research undertaken on behalf of UK Men's Shed Association, to evaluate the value and impact men's sheds had on members, it was found that Sheds were making a significant contribution to the improvement of health and well-being of all members generally.

This is true of The Silvers' Workshop where many friendships and skills have been made and learnt over the past nine years.

The Future.

This remains fluid as we are unable, at present, to objectively plan and set dates for events or long-term projects until such times as the outcome of the landlord's planning appeal has been made public and what he then intends doing with the property and when.

Financial Report and Balance Sheet.

At first glance, the Workshop's finances appear healthy, but despite a number of sales opportunities in the last quarter, excluding the welcome grant received from the National Lottery Communities Fund at the end of the year, our income, including bank interest only exceeded our expenditure by just over £2,700.

Our decision to increase our membership fee to £70 per annum at our AGM did a little to offset the increase in energy prices, and we are fortunate that our landlord has committed to maintain our rent for the Workshop at £6,000 per annum. Even so, with an uncertain future ahead of us in terms of our accommodation, it would have been good to have created a bit more of a buffer to add to our investment account during the year.

The year also saw a significant increase in our use of card payments for public sales and for members paying daily subscriptions and donations for materials. Through the course of the year we took over £4,000 in card payments, four times the amount taken the previous year, for a total commission of £69.06. The significant gains in terms of the reduction of cash handling and banking when nearly all of our local bank branches have closed are easily balanced by this small amount of commission, especially in view of the loss made over Christmas when we accepted a (very good) counterfeit £50 note.

The successful bid for the National Lottery Grant of £9908, which was received at the end of December, was based on Sustaining the Workshop. £6000 of the grant is to cover our rent for 2024; the remainder is designed to allow us to become self-sufficient for our Personal Appliance Testing through training and purchase of testing equipment, and to pay for administrative support for further grant applications which we intend to submit during 2024.

The Silvers' Workshop - Draft Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2023

ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
Current Assets		Current Liabilities:	
Cash in Bank	£4,659.59	Invoices Payable	£990.00
Cash in Building Account	£42,970.00	Members Expenses (claimed but unpaid)	£0.00
Cash in Paypal Account	£302.16	Rent	£0.00
Uncleared Funds		Outstanding Electricity	£0.00
Cash Held	£228.25	Outstanding Gas	£0.00
Petty Cash/Float	£50.00		
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	£48,210.00	TOTAL LIABILITIES	£990.00
FIXED ASSETS		WORKSHOP EQUITY	
Land	£0.00		
Buildings & Furniture	£160.00	Grand total Assets	£51,721.00
Tools	£2,145.00	Less total liability	£990.00
Stock	£890.00		
Materials	£280.00		
Consumables	£36.00		
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	£3,511.00		
GRAND TOTAL ASSETS	£51,721.00	WORKSHOP EQUITY	£50,731.00
		Last Year:	£38,052.20

This completes The Silvers' Workshop, Annual Charities Commission Report for 2023, on this day 12th January 2024

Signed

Barry Fowler
Chairman.